

Remarks

After entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-3, 12, and 14-29 are pending in the present application. Independent claim 1 and dependent claim 12 are currently amended for antecedent basis purposes, as discussed further below. In addition, independent claim 27 is currently amended to include the substance of dependent claims 30 and 31 and, as such, dependent claims 30 and 31 are cancelled.

Claim 27 and 28 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0088246 to Bureau et al. (hereinafter Bureau et al.). Claim 30 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Bureau et al. Claims 1-3, 12, 14-26, and 29 are allowed. The Examiner indicates that claim 31 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Allowed Independent Claim 1

As set forth above, allowed independent claim 1 is currently amended for antecedent basis purposes. Specifically, line 9 of claim 1 is currently amended to read “[a] the plurality of modules (100) ~~stacked in a first direction~~, each being formed...” because “a plurality of modules (14, 100) stacked in a first direction” is already introduced in line 4. In other words, in line 9, “a plurality of modules” is currently replaced with “the plurality of modules” merely for antecedent basis purposes. The phrase “stacked in a first direction” is currently deleted to avoid redundancy of line 4.

Further, line 16 of claim 1 is currently amended to replace “passages (137-139)” with “the channels (137-139)” because “channels (137, 138, 139)” are already introduced in line 6 of claim 1. Accordingly, the term “passages” is replaced with the term “channels” in line 16 merely for antecedent basis purposes.

Likewise, dependent claim 12 is currently amended to replace “passages” with “channels” to be consistent with claim 1 merely for antecedent basis purposes.

Amended Independent Claim 27

As set forth above, the Examiner indicated that dependent claim 31 would be allowed if incorporated into independent claim 27 including intervening claim 30. Independent claim 27 is currently amended to include the substance of allowable dependent claim 31 and intervening claim 30. As such, the Applicants respectfully assert that amended independent claim 27 is in condition for allowance.

Notably, line 16 of amended claim 27 includes the same correction regarding the antecedent basis issue for “a plurality of modules”/“the plurality of modules” that was discussed above for claim 1, line 9. Also, line 23 of amended claim 27 includes the same correction regarding the antecedent basis issue for “the passages”/“the channels” that was discussed above for claim 1, line 16.

Finally, it should be appreciated claims 30 and 31 are currently cancelled merely to expedite the prosecution of the allowed claims and the cancellation of claims 30 and 31 is not an admission that independent claim 27, before amendment, lacks novelty or nonobviousness.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that independent claims 1 and 27, and the claims that depend therefrom, are both novel and non-obvious such that these claims are in condition for allowance, which allowance is respectfully requested. If any issue regarding the allowability of any of the pending claims could be readily resolved, or if other action could be taken to further advance prosecution, such as an Examiner’s Amendment, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner telephone the undersigned in this regard.

Although no fees are believed to be due at this time, the Commissioner is authorized to charge our Deposit Account No. 08-2789 in the name of Howard & Howard Attorneys PLLC for any fees or credit the account for any overpayment for this matter.

Respectfully submitted,

HOWARD & HOWARD ATTORNEYS PLLC

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